

TO: Heads of Federal Agencies

1. What does this document do? GRS Transmittal 15 provides revisions to General Records Schedule (GRS) 23, Item 7, Transitory Records. NARA is revising this item in the GRS to explicitly include very short-term temporary e-mail messages.

2. What records are covered by GRS 23, Item 7? Transitory records are records of short-term (180 days or less) interest, including in electronic form (e.g., e-mail messages), which have minimal or no documentary or evidential value. Examples of transitory e-mail and other records include, but are not limited to: (1) routine requests for information or publications and copies of replies which require no administrative action, no policy decision, and no special compilation or research for reply; (2) originating office copies of letters of transmittal that do not add any information to that contained in the transmitted material, and receiving office copy if filed separately from transmitted material; (3) quasi-official notices including memoranda and other records that do not serve as the basis of official actions, such as notices of holidays or charity and welfare fund appeals, bond campaigns, and similar records; (4) records documenting routine activities containing no substantive information, such as routine notifications of meetings, scheduling of work-related trips and visits, and other scheduling related activities; (5) suspense and tickler files or “to-do” and task lists that serve as a reminder that an action is required on a given date or that a reply to action is expected, and if not received, should be traced on a given date.

3. Do I have to take any action to implement this GRS change? Our regulations (36 CFR 1228.50(d)) require you to disseminate GRS changes within 6 months of receipt. If your agency already has a NARA-approved agency records disposition schedule for the same series or system of records, you may apply either the disposition instructions in these GRS or the disposition instructions previously approved by NARA (see 36 CFR 1228.42(b)). The chosen authority must be applied on an agency-wide basis. You must notify NARA within 90 days of this GRS Transmittal No. 15 if you intend to continue using the agency schedule. If you wish to apply a retention period that differs from that specified in the GRS, you must submit a Standard Form (SF) 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority, to us for approval.

4. How do I get copies of the new GRS 23? We are posting a set of the GRS on our web site at <http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/ardor/records-schedules.html>. GRS 23 is available for downloading in HTML, MS Word, and PDF formats.

5. Whom do I contact for further information? Address questions to the appraiser in our Life Cycle Management Division with whom your agency normally works. A list of NARA workgroups is available on our website at <http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/appraisal/index.html>.

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Archivist of the United States